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Ethanol Benefits Michigan Consumers

LANSING, MICH. – As the Labor Day holiday weekend nears, it is important to note the valuable role ethanol will play in your travel plans and the positive affect it will have on your wallet. The production of ethanol and its use continues to expand across the United States, including here in Michigan. By extending our fuel supply and reducing our dependence on foreign oil, consumers can be grateful for the relief ethanol provides at the pump and to the environment.

In fact, consumers would be paying 89 cents more per gallon if ethanol was to disappear and gas prices could rise by as much as 92%, according to the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) study. “As we look for options to lessen our dependence on foreign oil, we certainly need to look to ethanol as part of the solution. It not only helps lessen energy independence, but helps keep money in our wallets as well,” explained Jody Pollok-Newsom, Corn Marketing Program of Michigan (CMPM) executive director.

Many consumers are using ethanol on a daily basis and do not even realize it. The most common use of ethanol-blended fuel is E10, a blend of 10 percent ethanol and 90 percent gasoline. Currently, all automobile manufacturers warrantee the use of E10 in their vehicles and according to the Renewable Fuels Association (RFA), more than 80 percent of all the gasoline in the United States is blended with 10 percent ethanol. This blending extends America’s current gasoline supply and saves consumers money.

Another ethanol-blended fuel available to consumers is E85, a blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline. This type of fuel is designed for use in flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs) which can run on ordinary gasoline, gasoline blended with 85 percent ethanol and all combinations in between. E85 fuel continues to thrive with an ever-increasing number of FFVs on the road today and a growing number of E85 pumps being installed across the state. “People want to drive FFVs and they want to fill up with ethanol. A few years ago, there were only two E85 pumps in Michigan and today we have more than 100,” explained Pollok-Newsom. A growing number of these pumps are blender pumps, which offers flex-fuel drivers even more choices when fueling up. Blender pumps utilize two underground tanks, one containing unleaded gasoline and the other containing E85 and dispense a variety of blends by mixing the appropriate percentages of fuel from each underground tank. In addition to offering the more traditional fuels such E10 and E85, blender pumps can also dispense a variety of mid-level ethanol blends – often E20 (20 percent ethanol/80 percent gasoline), E30 (30 percent ethanol/70 percent gasoline) and E40 (40 percent ethanol/60 percent gasoline). For a complete listing of FFVs and E85 pump locations, visit: www.e85fuel.com.

Aside from the cost savings consumers enjoy when filling up with E10 or E85, ethanol blends also offer a variety of other benefits as well. Ethanol adds oxygen to gasoline, helping it burn more completely, thereby reducing tailpipe emissions, including carbon monoxide and other greenhouse gases. In fact, one of the nation’s leading ethanol organizations, Growth Energy, estimates that as a result of E10 blending alone, there has been a significant reduction in the amount of dangerous emissions from vehicles throughout the country – equivalent to the effect of removing 7 million cars from our nation’s roadways. Moreover, unlike oil, American-made, renewable ethanol is non-toxic, water soluble, biodegradable and displaces crude oil that we would otherwise

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need to import. This offers our country critically needed independence and security from foreign sources of energy and reduced oil imports by 445 million barrels in 2010 – a savings of \$34 billion.

“As you head out Labor Day weekend, look for ethanol-blended fuels,” said Pollok-Newsom. “Do your part to clean up our air and reduce our nation’s dependence on foreign oil while saving yourself money – choose America’s homegrown renewable-fuel: ethanol.”

Headquartered in Lansing, the CPM is a legislatively-established statewide program that utilizes one-cent per bushel of Michigan corn sold. Investments are made in the areas of research, education, market development, and new uses in an effort to enhance the economic position of Michigan corn farmers. The CPM works cooperatively with the Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA), a grassroots-membership association representing the state’s corn grower’s political interests since the 1970’s. Michigan’s corn industry adds more than one billion dollars to the state’s economy annually and in 2009, Michigan’s corn farmers harvested a record setting crop of more than 309 million bushels. For more information, visit the website of the MCGA and the CPM at www.micorn.org.

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